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SPECIFICATION

Electromagnetic Contactor

Technical Field

The present invention relates to an electromagnetic contactor used for opening or closing a motor circuit, for example, and more specifically, to the processing of emission arc gas caused when a contact point is opened or closed.

Prior Art

The processing of emission arc gas in an electromagnetic contactor is disclosed, for example, in Japanese Laid Open Utility Model Publication No. 01-70228. Conventional examples of Figs. 3 to 5 will be described. Fig. 3 is a longitudinal sectional view of a tripolar electromagnetic contactor. Fig. 4 is a perspective view of a power distribution part of the center pole of the electromagnetic contactor of Fig. 3., and Fig. 5 is a plan view of the main part of Fig. 4. With reference to Figs. 3 to 5 (Fig. 3 in particular), the electromagnetic contactor has a main contact point 3 for a plurality of phases (three phase in the drawing) consisting of a pair of fixed contacts 1, 1 opposed to each other, and a movable contact 2 for bridging the space therebetween. One end of the fixed contact 1 and both ends of the movable contact 2 are jointed with a fixed contact point 4 and a movable contact point 5, respectively. The other end of the fixed contact 1 is integrated with a main terminal 6. The mold case of the electromagnetic contactor consists of an upper frame 7 and a lower frame 8. The fixed contact 1 is pressed into the slot of the upper frame 7 from left and right in Fig. 3, respectively. The top part of the upper frame 7 is attached with an arc-suppressing cover 9 so as to cover the main contact point 3.

The movable contact 2 is inserted to a movable contact support 10 and is retained by a contact spring 11 (compression coil spring). The movable contact support 10 is guided to an upper frame 7 in a slidable manner in the longitudinal direction of Fig. 3 and is connected with a movable iron core 12. On the other hand, the lower frame 8 stores therein a fixed

iron core 13 and an electromagnetic coil 14. The space between the electromagnetic coil 14 and the movable iron core 12 is inserted with a return spring 15 consisting of a compression coil spring for biasing the movable iron core 12 in the upper direction of Fig. 3. Reference numeral 16 denotes a coil terminal for connecting the electromagnetic coil 14 to an operation circuit (not shown).

In Fig. 4, the neighboring main contact points 3 have therebetween an interphase barrier 17 integrated with the upper frame 7 (only one side thereof is shown in Fig. 4). The front and rear parts of the main contact point 3 (space to the main terminal 6) are covered with a front and rear wall 18 of the arc-suppressing cover 9. As shown in the drawing, the front and rear wall 8 consists of the combination of a center part 18a having a "T"-shaped cross section and a left and right part 18b having a "J"-shaped cross section between which an emission window 19 through which arc gas passes is provided. An emission window 20 is also provided between the "J"-shaped part 18b and the interphase barrier 17 (the space extending to the side wall of the upper frame 7 for one side with regards to the main contact point 3 for left and right poles).

In Figs. 4 and 5, the inner wall face of the interphase barrier 17 (the inner wall face of the side wall of the upper frame 7 for one side with regards to the main contact point 3 for left and right poles) includes a step in accordance with the outer end face of the arc-suppressing cover 18. The space in which the main terminal 6 is provided has an increased width between the left and right inner wall faces. As shown in Fig. 5, the width of the main terminal 6 is determined in accordance with the size of the above increased width between the inner wall faces, and the width of the fixed contact 1 integrated with the main terminal 6 has a narrower width than that of the main terminal 6. The vicinity of the root of the fixed contact 1 to the main terminal 6 is integrated with a pair of left and right attachment pieces 21 projecting in a hook-like manner. As already described, as regards the interphase barrier 17 partially shown in the perspective view of Fig. 5 (the side wall of the upper frame 7 for one side with regards to the main contact point 3 of left and right poles [the same applies to the following description]), the fixed contact 1 is pressed into the slot 22

via the attachment piece 21.

In Fig. 3, when the electromagnetic coil 14 is excited, the movable iron core 12 is attracted toward the fixed iron core 13 by the elastic force of the return spring 15. As a result, the movable contact 2 bridges the space between the fixed contacts 1, 1 to close the power distribution path for each phase. Thereafter, when the electromagnetic coil 14 is demagnetized, the movable iron core 12 is returned to the position shown by the restoring force of the return spring 15 to open the power distribution path for each phase. When the open or close operation (open operation in particular) is performed, an arc is created between the fixed and movable contact points 4 and 5, which results in the mold resin (e.g., upper frame 7, movable contact support 10) being heated up to a high temperature, and evaporating, causing "arc gas." This increase in internal pressure in the surrounding space of the main contact point 3, enclosed by the upper frame 7, the arc-suppressing cover 9, and the movable contact support 10, causes the arc gas to be blown out to the exterior via the emission windows 19 and 20 along the paths shown by the arrows in Figs. 4 and 5.

When the arc is blown out as described above, the arc gas passing through the emission window 20 in particular flows along the planer inner wall face of the interphase barrier 17 or the side wall of the upper frame 7. As a result, the arc gas immediately reaches, while maintaining the high temperature caused at the generation, the emission window 20, and therefore heats the attachment piece 21 and/or the main terminal 6. This can cause a problem in which, if the arc gas is emitted with a high frequency, the temperature of the main terminal 6 exceeds a certain limit, leading to damage of the wiring cable. The attachment piece 21 is also affected by the significant temperature increase, because the attachment piece 21 receives the blown arc gas first and has a small size and a small heat capacity, which leads to the upper frame 7, in contact with the attachment piece 21, to melt. In this case, as the interphase barrier 17 is heated by both left and right sides, it may melt, which could result in interphase short-circuiting.

In view of the above, it is an objective of the present invention to reduce the

temperature of the emission arc gas, which would thus prevent the temperature increase of the main terminal and the damage to the interphase barrier, for example.

Disclosure of the Invention

In order to solve the above problem, the invention according to Claim 1 provides an electromagnetic contactor having a main contact point for a plurality of phases consisting of a pair of fixed contacts opposed to each other and a movable contact for bridging the space therebetween, wherein the neighboring main contact points have therebetween an interphase barrier, and an emission path for arc gas caused when the main contact point is opened or closed has, at the middle thereof, a concave section provided at the inner wall face of the interphase barrier.

A conventional interphase barrier has an inner wall face that is flat and smooth and that has no step, thus causing arc gas to immediately flow to an emission window along this flat and smooth face. Thus, the present invention intends to reduce the rate at which the arc gas is emitted by configuring the inner wall face of the interphase barrier of the arc gas emission path to have a concave section at which the arc gas accumulates, thus impeding the flow of arc gas. This enables the arc gas to disperse to the interphase barrier an increased amount of its heat, before reaching the emission window, thus reducing the temperature of the arc gas blown out of the emission window.

According to the invention of Claim 2, in the invention of Claim 1, the concave section consists of a narrow groove perpendicular to the emission path of the arc gas.

According to the invention of Claim 3, in the invention of Claim 2, the inner wall face of the interphase barrier at the upstream side of the arc gas emission path is recessed from the downstream side so as to sandwich the concave section. This allows the arc gas to enter the concave section in a smooth manner.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of the power distribution part of the center pole of the electromagnetic contactor showing an embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a plan view of the main part of Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a longitudinal sectional view of the electromagnetic contactor showing a conventional example.

Fig. 4 is a perspective view showing the power distribution part of the center pole of the electromagnetic contactor of Fig. 3.

Fig. 5 is a plan view of the main part of Fig. 4.

(Description of Reference Numerals)

- 1 Fixed contact
- 2 Movable contact
- 3 Main contact point
- 6 Main terminal
- 7 Upper frame
- 9 Arc-suppressing cover
- 10 Movable contact support
- 17 Interphase barrier
- 19 Emission window
- 20 Emission window
- 23 Concave section

Best Mode for Carrying out the Invention

Hereinafter, with reference to Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, an embodiment of the present invention for an electromagnetic contactor shown in the conventional example will be described. Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a power distribution part of the center pole of the

electromagnetic contactor. Fig. 2 is a plan view of the main part of Fig. 1. The components corresponding to those of the conventional example are shown with the same reference numerals. In Figs. 1 and 2, the inner wall face of the interphase barrier 17 includes the concave section 23 provided so as to be placed at the middle of the arc gas emission path shown by the arrow. In the drawing, the concave section 23 is provided to have a narrow groove perpendicular to the emission path of the arc gas. The inner wall face of the interphase barrier 17 at the upstream side of the arc gas emission path is recessed from the downstream side so as to sandwich the concave section 23 and these inner wall faces have therebetween a step S (Fig. 2).

In such an electromagnetic contactor, the arc gas flows along the interphase barrier 17 to be subsequently blown out from the emission window 20. This arc gas reaches the concave section 23 at the middle of the emission path from the arc generation point to the emission window 20 and enters this concave section 23 to collect therein. Thereafter, the arc gas is pushed out to the emission window 20. This reduces the flow rate of the arc gas when compared to a case where the inner wall face has a planer shape, and increases the amount of heat dispersed to the interphase barrier 17 through heat transfer, which in turn reduces the temperature of the arc gas emitted from the emission window 20, and thus suppresses damage to the wiring cable caused by an increase in temperature of the main terminal 6 and fusion of the interphase barrier 17 due to an excessively heated fixed contact attachment piece 21, for example. The step S provided at the front and rear parts of the concave section 23 allows the arc gas to enter the concave section 23 more easily. Thus, this step S makes it possible to adjust, by the size thereof, the time during which the arc gas accumulates. However, the step S is not always required, and the front and rear parts of the concave section 23 may be of the same level. The shape of the concave section 23 is not limited to the narrow groove and may have a square concave shape or a circular concave shape, for example.

Industrial Applicability

As described above, the present invention provides a concave section that works as a